



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.0793 | FAX (517) 373.5607

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/george/

For Immediate Release
January 23, 2006

Contact: Sherry Sofia
517-373-0793

Sen. George: Michigan's unhealthiness crippling state's economy

LANSING – Sen. Tom George today unveiled a series of wellness initiatives that will encourage healthy behavior and subsequently reduce health care costs in Michigan to help revive our economy.

During press conferences today in Kalamazoo and Lansing, George unveiled Phase Three – Healthy Living Initiatives, and announced it is a continuation of his plan to bring Michigan in line with other states in terms of overall health and wellness.

“Michigan’s economic sickness reflects the poor health of its people,” said George, the only doctor in the Senate. “Michigan is by far one of the unhealthiest states because we are less active and partake in more unhealthy behaviors than our counterparts in other states.

“These behaviors subsequently result in the increased health care costs that are crippling our economy. Our businesses, schools and local and state governments cannot keep up with the rising costs of health care. We need comprehensive state policy changes that will encourage healthy behavior.”

The initiatives will:

- Establish personal responsibility agreements for adult Medicaid recipients;
- Revise the Medicaid verification process;
- Require physical education in elementary schools;
- Allow pocketbook incentives for Medicaid recipients who make healthy choices;
- Provide state contracting preferences for businesses that offer employee wellness programs;
- Add use of tobacco products as a criteria for determining health insurance premiums; and
- Create a Michigan Outdoor Fitness Award.

“Although Michigan spends more per capita on public health and its residents are more likely to have health insurance, simply buying more medical services has not made us healthier,” said George, R-Texas Township. “These incentives will encourage healthy behaviors and get Michigan back on track economically and physically.”

###